PLANT FACT SHEET

Sambucus canadensis L.

GENUS *Sambucus* **FAMILY** Viburnaceae

COMMON NAMES American elderberry, Canadian elderberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Flowers

The ripe fruit are cooked and eaten. They are also used for flavouring wines and for making drinks. They can also be dried. They are used in jams, jellies and pies.
The flowers can be dipped in batter and fried. They are also used to make a hot drink.
Caution: The unripe fruit and leaves contain cyanide. The young leaves need to be well cooked before eating.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized shrub. It grows 1-4 m tall. It forms suckers. The branches form a wide, broad crown. The twigs have a white pith. Each stem lives for 4-6 years then dies down and is replaced by new shoots. The leaves are compound and opposite. They are like feathers. They are 15-20 cm long and have 5-11 leaflets. The flowers are in large groups 20-30 cm across. They are white. The fruit are dark purple or black berries.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in rich moist soils along streams. It suits hardiness zones 4-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown by seeds, cuttings or division of roots. Two different varieties are needed for fruit to form.

NOTES

Also put in the family Sambucaceae and Caprifoliaceae. Plants are rich in Vitamin C.

Possibly now in the family Viburnaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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